

Original Paper

A Hilly Primary School Teacher's Life: Supports, Challenges and Aspirations

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Received: May 13, 2019

Accepted: May 24, 2019

Online Published: June 28, 2019

doi:10.22158/jetss.v1n1p40

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/jetss.v1n1p40>

Abstract

This article is an outcome of a qualitative study that aimed to explore professional as well as personal life of a primary school teacher in hilly area of Bangladesh. This study investigated organisation of a teacher's life along in remote area with the type of supports she gets from her family and school for professional development, sort of barriers and challenges s/he faces in teaching profession and kind of future plan and aspiration she keeps with teaching. The study was conducted following ethnographic style of research. To carry out the investigation a school teacher of a hilly primary school of Rangamati, Bangladesh was selected purposively. Data for the study were gathered by shadowing the teacher for consecutive three days; all her activities were observed for consequently three days from beginning to end of school hour. After each day of observation, a semi-structured interview was conducted with the teacher for collecting more professional and personnel information and clarification on the activities observed. Finding of the study revealed that even after facing many challenges to survive in teaching profession with having insufficient supports and facilities a teacher of a rural hilly area might aspire to contribute significantly in this greatest profession.

Keywords

teacher's life, teaching English, EIA, support, challenge, aspiration

1. Introduction

Teachers are the crucial elements of any educational system. They are the public face of education, and their direct actions influence school characteristics, such as students' achievement and enrolment, as well as their retention (Seebruck, 2015; Beijjaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004). Thus, it is essential ensuring teachers' necessary supports so that they can perform best for the community as well as for the nation. This most important profession however does not get the recognition it deserves. In most of the developing countries like Bangladesh, the profession does not attract qualified and ambitious people

because it is poorly remunerated (Perry, 2017; Tasnim, 2006; Haq & Islam, 2005; Ingersoll, 2001; Murnane & Olsen, 1990). In addition, teachers working in remote areas have inadequate facilities and supports but face many challenges in their teaching profession. However, teachers' satisfaction, beliefs, practices and attitudes are important for understanding and improving educational processes. They are closely linked to teachers' strategies for coping with challenges in their daily professional life and to their general well-being, and they shape students' learning environment and influence student motivation and achievement. Hence, it is important understanding teachers' attitude, motivation and desire to ensure the maximum outcome.

In the recent past, teachers' professional identity has emerged as a separate research area (e.g., Bullough, 1997; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Knowles, 1992; Kompf, Bond, Dworet, & Boak, 1996), even though still there is very few studies been conducted in Bangladesh which might help to understand teachers' lives here (Haq & Islam, 2005). Teachers' lives in the remote areas of Bangladesh, like costal, choar, haor and hilly areas are even more unexplored. This article will portray the scenario of a hilly primary school teacher's professional practice, organization of her school's professional life and the teacher as an individual person. Messages of this article will create scopes for the concerned people related to teaching learning to feel about the life of a hilly primary teacher. Challenges, needs, professional practices, aspirations of a hilly primary teacher will be explored here, which will help the policy makers to rethink about them, trainers could reshape training programmes and the researchers interested to work in this area will find further scopes of researching. This study mainly attempted to answer the following questions:

- a) What kind of support and facilities a teacher in remote hilly primary school enjoys for teaching?
- b) What sort of challenges and barriers a primary school teacher in remote area faces in teaching profession and how she/he overcomes those?
- c) What aspirations and plan encourage a primary school teacher of remote area to stay in teaching profession?

2. Method

This study is a result of a qualitative study conducted as part of an intervention project titled English in Action (EIA). This study investigated how a primary school teacher in hilly area conceptualizes her role identity and what kind of supports she gets from her family and school for her professional development, what barriers and challenges she faces in her profession and what is her future plan and aspiration with teaching. The author as a researcher of the project had to spend more than a year, though interruptedly, with the teacher for his professional purpose. Consequently, he had opportunities to observe her personal life partly and professional life very closely. To better understand the teacher's professional life and how it is organised, constrained and supported by the organisation of the school's professional life and to understand the teacher as an individual person and a practitioner multiple sources of information have been used. The study was conducted in an ethnographic style of research.

To carry out the investigation a school teacher of a hilly primary school of Rangamati, Bangladesh was selected purposively. Necessary data of the study were gathered through shadowing the teacher for a period of consecutive three days. Each day, data for the study were gathered through three methods, 1) direct timed observation of Teacher's activities, throughout the day, 2) Collection of artefacts (e.g., photographing timetables, policy documents, lesson plans, students work), and photography of key activities and 3) Teacher interviews; to extend the researchers understandings gained through 1. & 2. including discussion of observations, artefacts or photographs collected and to allow the researcher and teacher to share further information and understanding, which could not be gathered by direct observation or by the collection of artefacts. In addition, the researcher had informal discussion with head teacher, assistant teachers and students to get further information in ensuring triangulation of data. All the activities of the teacher were observed intensively for consequent three days from beginning to end of school hour. After each day observation there was a 30 minute semi-structured interview with the teacher for collecting more professional and personnel information of the teacher and clarification on the activities observed. Teacher's activity were noted down and the interview was recorded in audio recorder with prior consent from the interviewee. Afterward the interviews were transcript to English. With observation notes and interview records, some photographs were taken on various aspects of school and teacher's activities and practices. Besides the above-mentioned sources of data some information were collected from informal discussion with the head teacher and assistant teachers. Before analysing the data, they were processed in a proper way. The data were taken in an observation sheet from the classroom. Then it was preserved in MS word file. All the electronics files were properly stored in different folders according to the school name and teachers ID number. Collected data are analysed and explained narratively and with some tables.

2.1 About the Study Area

Rangamati is a travel destination of Bangladesh that is known as "Lake City". It is a favourite holiday destination for local and global tourists because of its beautiful landscape, scenic beauty, lake, colourful tribes (Chakma, Marma, etc.), its flora and fauna, tribal museum, hanging bridge, homespun textile products, ivory jewellery and the tribal men and women who fashion them. Different types of ethnic people with cultural diversities live here together. However, educational setup of this region is not much rich as its natural beauty. Rangamati is the biggest and one of the remotest districts of Bangladesh where literacy rate of this area is only 41.9% (male 49.1% and female 33.9%) which is less than national literacy rate 56.1% (BBS, 2013). Although Bangla is the national language, different communities living in Rangamati use their own languages to express themselves. English language teachers of this hilly area might not have similar experiences with the teachers of plain land because English is the third language for these ethnic people where Bangla is second and almost all the tribal groups have unique mother tongue. Total population of Rangamati sadar sub-district (study area) is 76732; male 55.79%, female 44.21%; Muslim 37.80%, Hindu 12.27%, Buddhist 49.25%, and others 0.68% (BBS, 2013).

3. Result

3.1 Understanding the Organization of the School

For understanding professional life of teacher we need to understand her school, its professional life and its environments as school environment affects not only learners' academic achievement (Blum et al., 2002; Rutter et al., 1979) but also teachers and their work (OECD, 2009).

3.1.1 Overview of the School

Name of the school where the teacher of the study teaches is Joba Primary School (pseudo name) situated in Rangamati district; an extensive hilly area in Bangladesh lies in southeastern part of the country. Year of establishment of this school is 1927, which is situated in the police line area of Rangamati sadar Upazila (one of the ten sub-districts of Rangamati district). Most of the primary school going children of this area study in this school. Police Super (SP) of Rangamati is the president of this school management committee (SMC). The school located in a quiet and calm area that is in the Northeast side of Upazila Sadar. It is an area where all the high ranking administrative bureaucratise like District Commissioner (DC), Additional District Commissioner (ADC), Civil Sergeant, Police Super (SP) and Member of Parliament of Rangamati live. Thus, this would be said as a VIP area. The school is a one-storied building where number of total room is 6 (5 classrooms + 1 office room). Teachers' room and the head teacher's room is the same. Electricity supply is available in this school though in many schools of Rangamati electricity is not available. There is no playground in this school. Total number of teachers in this school is eight including the head teacher and all of them are female. There are 354 students in the school studying from pre-primary to grade-5. Number of students of this school desegregated by sex and grade are presented in the following table.

Table 1. Number of Student in the School Desegregated by Grade and Sex

Grade	Girls	Boys	Total
Pre-primary	45	47	92
Grade 1	36	31	67
Grade 2	35	25	60
Grade 3	28	30	58
Grade 4	24	26	50
Grade 5	14	13	27
Total		354	

3.1.2 Classroom Infrastructure and Resources

Among five classrooms in this school three of those are similar in terms of infrastructural facilities and rest two classrooms are also similar. Classroom for grade one, four and five has two doors, three windows, one light, one fan and a big blackboard for each classroom. Pre-primary, grade two and three

has two doors, six windows, two lights, two fans and two big blackboards for each classroom.

The school is operated in double shift pattern and same teachers work in both of the shifts. In Shift-1, from 9:30am to 12:00pm, the students of pre-primary, grade 1 & 2 come. On the other hand, duration of Shift-2 is 12:30pm to 4:15pm when grade 3, 4 & 5 attend.

Many parents come to the school regularly to drop their child to the school and to take their child to home from the school. All the teachers were observed very cordial with the parents. There is a SMC whose president is the police super (SP) of Rangamati. According to the head teacher of the school, he (SP) always tries to help the school.

3.1.3 The School as a Place to Work in

From researcher's point of view, the school is a very good place to work in. All the teachers, including the head teacher are very supportive to each other. The natural beauty around the school is really good. Enough natural air and light is available in the school and classrooms. There is an excellent bird's eye view of Kaptai Lake from the school, but there is shortage of room. There is only one room for head teacher and assistant teachers, even though this is not well furnished. Apart from the facilities, the school is a nice place to work in.

3.1.4 Relationship among the Teachers

Some teachers were observed very few times to discuss about a lesson. But when they were doing so they mainly discussed how to teach a lesson and what materials will be appropriate for that lesson. However, most of the time the teachers talk with their colleagues informally. In the school they are like a family. The school is very much flexible to the teachers and relationship among the teachers of the school is very informal. According to the head teacher, the school-community relationship is also good. Though community is not so interested about schools activities, they get involved in the schools activities if they are called. Most of the people living in this area completed their primary education from this school, thus the inhabitants of this area cooperative to the teachers.

3.2 *Understanding Organization of the Teacher's Life*

3.2.1 About the Teacher and Her Teaching Career

Life of the teacher has been studied in this study is named Humaira Naz (pseudo name). Humaira Naz is a 37-year-old primary school teacher with over 9 years teaching experience. She currently teaches in a small primary school named Joba Primary School (pseudonyms have been used for teacher and school) in Rangamati hill district of Bangladesh.

The teacher has a higher educational qualification (Master of Art). She also has Certificate in Education and some training like quality improvement training, subject-based training (on Bangla, Math and English). She got engaged with EIA programme for last two years and got intensive training on English language teaching. She teaches English, Math, Social Science and Religion at different grades. She is teaching English for last one and half years after getting involved with EIA programme.

She is very positive in accepting new and better ideas and techniques. She is a good learner and very committed to her profession. She always tries to teach her students better and try to ensure students'

active participation in the teaching-learning process. She has a very good relationship with all her colleagues. Besides teaching, she does some other professional activities like “Uthan Boithak” (courtyard meeting) or monthly meeting with guardians of school going-aged children. She also helps the head teacher in her managerial and administrative tasks.

The teacher can be said as a good teacher with having commitment to her profession. She not only interested to take training but also try to apply those in the classrooms she teach. She wants to develop herself through lots of training for teaching in better ways which prove her commitment with her profession.

3.2.2 Teacher’s Professional Life (in Class & out of Class)

a. Typical Day of Teacher at School

The teacher takes minimum six lessons a day. She takes all four lessons in shift-1 and two lessons in shift-2. Though she gets some leisure time in shift-2, she does not get a single moment time off in shift-1. The teacher’s class routine is as below.

Table 2. Teacher’s Class Schedule for Shift-1 (9:30 pm to 12:30 pm) from Saturday to Thursday

Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3	Lesson 4	
9:30 am-10:20 am	10:20 am-11:00 am	11:00 am-11:30 am	11:30 am-12:00 pm	12:00 pm-12:15 pm
Subject: English Grade: I	Subject: Math Grade: IV (Special batch (Note 1)) (Actual time 10:30 am-11:30am)		Subject: Social science Grade: V (Special batch) (Actual time 11:30 am-12:30am)	Assembly

Table 3. Teacher’s Class Schedule for Shift-2 (12:30 pm to 4:15 pm) from Saturday to Thursday

Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3	Lesson 4	Lesson 5	Lesson 6
12:30 pm- 1:10 pm	1:10 pm- 1:45 pm	1:45 pm- 2:15 pm	2:15 pm- 2:45 pm	2:45 pm- 3:15 pm	3:15 pm- 3:45 pm
	Subject: Math Grade: IV	Lunch			Subject: Religion Grade: IV (Except Thursday)

According to the teacher, she cannot do any school related work in her home as she has two small babies who do not let her do this. As a result, she cannot make lesson plan or be prepared for next day’s lesson at home. She does these in the leisure period of shift-2. It would be great for her if the routine would make in such way where she could get some time after each class.

b. Classroom Practice of the Teacher

Aim in life of the teacher was to become a teacher, out of such genuine feeling for teaching she tries to

emulate herself. She tries to perform according to the training she takes. For example, she was found EIA practices useful not only in English classes but also in other classes. She always tries to make her class participatory and interactive. The current approach of English Language Teaching (ELT) all over the world is communicative. The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) requires interactive classroom activities with the integration of the four language skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking (Sarwar, 2012). Students take part in different activities in her class and their participation is been ensured by her. She believes practicing on less “teachers’ talk time” and more “students’ talk time” in class. In the following, the teacher’s typical lesson have been described.

At first, teacher exchange greetings with the students. Then teacher does warm-up and motivational activities at the starting of all the lessons (English and other lessons).

After warm-up and motivational activities, teachers usually introduce the lesson which she is going to facilitate. During teaching of lesson, she uses various materials (if it’s an English language lesson) and tries to ensure students maximum involvement. Teacher assess the students understanding on the lesson orally or in written form. Then the teacher gives the students homework. In English language lessons, teacher usually sings goodbye song along with the students to conclude the lesson which is suggested by EIA. In all the classes (English+Others) there was a common practice observed and that is, teacher emphasized on elicitation and tries to elicit from the students most of the time. The teacher ensures two way interactions, that means, she prioritize the students opinion. She also encourage students on risk-taking with English and collaborative with the students. She tries to take care of all the students equally. She not only looks after learning of the fast learners but also the slower.

This is to note that the teacher uses many of audio-visual materials in English lesson which are suggested by EIA, but hardly uses any materials rather than textbook in other lessons. In the English lesson, she was found to engage the students more, but in the other lessons, she uses lecture method most of the time.

c. Teacher’s Professional Work outside School

The teacher has some professional duties rather than teaching. She has to participate in some professional activities besides teaching like participating in SMC meeting, *Maa somabesh* (meeting with mother groups), *Uthan boithak* (courtyard session), counselling of student etc. She meets the guardians to give information on their children’s attendance, homework, school dress or any other problems faced by the children and educational progress. Most of those works are occurred in one month interval. In the beginning of the year, teacher also participates in the field survey to ensure inclusion of all children in school. After school time, the teacher spends her all the time with her family. She does not do any private tuition or any other work after school hours. From the conversation with the teacher it is found that, all the teachers of her school have to do some professional activities outside classrooms and school has annual action plan on these activities. Some of those activities are given bellow.

Table 4. Teacher's Professional Activities besides Teaching (out of School)

Nature of activity/practices	Frequency/when occurred	Who attends
SMC meeting	One in a month	Most of the members
Home visit	At least one in a month	All teachers
Uthan Baithak, Socialwork (Councelling to prevent earlt marriage, child labour, corruption, etc.)	When needed	All teachers

d. Professional Activities outside Lesson inside School

During her stay at school, the teacher does some professional activities besides facilitating lessons. The activities observed in day-1 are given bellow.

Table 5. Teacher's Professional Activities besides Teaching (inside School)

Professional activity	When (times)	Where
The teacher was listening audio script and reading math book of class 4	1:05 pm (Day1)	Teachers' room
The teacher was checking students' class work of previous class.	2:40 pm (Day1)	Teachers' room
The teacher was listening from iPod to prepare next day's lesson.	3:10 pm (Day1)	Teachers' room
The teacher was reading audio script of class 1.	3:20 pm (Day1)	Teachers' room

The teacher always tries to have a look on those lessons in the leisure time that she is doing to teach. As a result, the teacher can plan how she will motivate her students for the lesson and can have the students' concentration most of the time.

3.2.3 Teacher's Personal Life

She has a family consisting of four members, including herself. Other members are her husband and two daughters. The elder one reads in grade-2 and the younger one is still too young. She resides nearby her parental home. As her husband often has official tours she choose to reside nearby her parental home to get supports in need. After school hour, she spends her time doing family works and giving time to family members. She does not get adequate time at home to be prepared for next day's lessons and hardly does any professional work at home, as she has two little babies and she has to give much time to them. She does not do any tuition or any other work outside the school. She loves to play games with her children and making foods for all the family members. After returning home from school she freshens up at first and then says prayer. She always tries to say prayer in time when she is at her home. Then she prepares food for both of her children and feed them. Then she prepares food for dinner. After that, she arranges all the things to prepare food that she brings in school next day for lunch and give some instructions to her household support about this. As she has to leave home for school in the morning she prepares all these at night. She also has a hobby of handicraft, though she does not get much time for that after birth of her babies. However, she tries to prepare some handicraft items during long vacation.

3.2.4 Supports and Facilities of the Teacher for Teaching

To facilitate the professional development of teachers, it must understand the process by which teachers grow professionally and the conditions that support and promote that growth (Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002, p. 947). For this reason, this research related to teachers' professional development has focused to analyse the relations between teachers' professional development in different kinds of school contexts (Beijaard et al., 2000, pp. 752-753), as well as personal life.

In the school where the selected teacher teaches, there are eight teachers working including the head teacher. Most of them have very low educational qualification, even Secondary School Certificate (SSC). List of the teachers working with the selected teachers is given below.

Table 6. Details of all Teachers in the Study School

Teacher (Name or number 1, 2 etc.)	Subject(s)	Qualifications
Head teacher	English	M.A. (C. In Ed)
Assistant teacher 1	English, Bangla, Religion	H.S.C. (C. In Ed)
Assistant teacher 2	Math, Social Science	S.S.C. (C. In Ed)
Assistant teacher 3	Bangla, Math, Science	B.A. (C. In Ed)
Assistant teacher 4	Math, English, Science	S.S.C. (C. In Ed)
Assistant teacher 5	Math, Social Science, Religion	S.S.C. (C. In Ed)
Assistant teacher 6	Bangla, English, Science	S.S.C. (C. In Ed)
Humaira Naz (pseudo name); Selected teacher for this study	English, Math, Social Science, Religion	M.A. (C. In Ed)

The selected teacher has a high educational qualification; she is a Master of Arts. She deserves to work in a better place with better facilities. However, she is working here, as this school is closer to her residence. If she leaves this school for better position and she have to live without her family. Thus, she is not trying for that. As a result, she is enjoying less facilities and supports, though she deserves more. To work better in a profession, it is essential to have a professional degree on that profession. If someone wants to practice as a doctor or engineer, she/he has to have a technical knowledge on those professions that might be ensured by a professional degree. Very similarly, Teaching is a complex and demanding work and there is a daily need for teachers to fully engage in that work with not only their heads, but also their hearts (Day, 2004; Elliott & Crosswell, 2001; Fried, 1995; Nias, 1996). A teacher can have knowledge on how to conduct a class successfully or how to deal with the students etc. through some professional training of teaching like B.Ed, M.Ed. The teacher is also interested to have this type of training or degree as she is very committed to teaching and wants to teach in better way. However, there is no B.Ed college not only in the Upazila the teacher resides in but also in the whole district. Thus, if she wants to get a professional degree on teaching, she has to live in the divisional

district without her family.

The teacher got some subject based training on Bangla, Mathematics and English. She also has Certificate in Education (C. in Ed.) and some trainings like Quality improvement training. She also got engaged with English in Action (EIA) programme for last two years and got intensive training on English language teaching. According to her,

I have attended quality improvement classroom and subject based training. In these trainings we had to demonstrate a lesson. In the demonstration classes and in the last cluster meeting on micro teaching I have observed that teachers try to elicit from the students rather teaching the lesson. At present, I try to apply this in my classroom, though I never tried this before.

From her speaking, it is clear that the teacher have some training that facilitate and support her in teaching. However, she believes that she is not getting follow-up or refresher trainings. In the case of EIA programme, the teacher takes part in one-day training in every month. Teacher Development Coordinator (TDC) and Teacher Facilitators (TF) of EIA frequently observed her class and gave necessary feedback on her teaching techniques.

It appears to be a professional necessity for teachers to be emotionally committed to their work, without this emotional connection teachers face the constant danger of burn-out in an increasingly intensified work environment (Nias, 1996). The school has a good environment with less pollution. The teacher believes that the students of the school response comparatively better from the students of other school where she taught earlier. All the colleagues of the teacher are very cordial. She gets great supports from all of them to work in the school. Head teacher of the school is also very helpful who always encourage her to work. These are the most significant supports from her school that help her to be emotionally committed to work.

The teacher has a good family support to her teaching. Her mother is also a schoolteacher, so the teacher gets many advices from her mother, which is very much helpful for her teaching. The teacher said about her family supports in the following way,

My mother is a teacher, thus I get many advices from her. If I prepare a lesson plan I show it to my mother and she provides her thoughtful feedback on it. My father reminds me to leave home for the school to reach the school timely.

EIA has provided some printed and electronic materials based on the textbooks of different grades. When the teacher showed those materials to her mother, she (mother) was distress thinking that she could not use those excellent materials in her school. Her mother used to prepare some teaching aids for using in her classroom. The teacher still preserved some of those teaching aids.

Husband of the teacher is also supportive to her profession. Though he works in a private farm, he helps the teacher in various ways like calculating students' result sheet. In the year ending time, the teacher usually becomes extremely busy with some administrative works. During that time, the teacher requests her husband to manage leave from his office. He does so and manages their children so that the teacher can work with full concentration.

3.2.5 Challenges Faced by the Teacher in School and out of School

In Bangladesh, 365925 teachers are teaching in 82218 primary schools, which are situated in plain land as well in costal, choar, haor and hilly areas (BANBEIS 2005). Not all of these teachers enjoy similar environment and facilities to work because of geographical differences of these school areas. Many studies (Mohiyud-Din, 1965; Rahman, 1996; Rahman, 1999; Maleque et al., 2004; Sadek et al., 2006; Sultana et al., 2008; Roshid, 2009) had been conducted based on plain land educational context. There are very few studies (Rahman et al., 2009) where sample had been selected from the school that situated beyond plain land. Therefore, the problems and challenges faced by the teachers of different rural area like hilly area are almost unexplored. In this article, some barriers and challenges which the teacher faces teaching beyond mainstream area have been unfolded.

The teacher comes to school on foot from her home. It normally takes 25-30 minutes to reach the school. There is no local transport available from the teacher's residence to the school. She has to reserve an auto rickshaw to reach the school, which is costly. On the other hand, to return home she does not get any transport. Therefore, she has to walk about an hour to up-down school.

The teacher has two little babies in her home. The elder one reads in class 2 and the younger one is so young. The teacher has to give enough time to them. She cannot do any official (school) work in her home. If she goes to hear any lesson from iPod with ear phone or write a lesson plan, she cannot do this because her younger child does not let her do this. She described this in this way,

In my house, I have a little baby who interrupts me a lot. My elder child reads in class 2, I also have to help her with her study. So I hear the audio with ear phone when I get time in the school. There is no scope of talking preparation in my home. If I could get some time before each of my lesson it would be better for me. I cannot do any work of school in my home as my babies are too young. If I sit with some papers of school at home they try to destroy those.

Starting experience of the teacher's teaching career was not very pleasant. She started her teaching career in a rural primary school situated in the deep of hills. All the inhabitants of the school area were tribal. There was not a single Bangali with whom she could talk for a minute. The teacher describe her experience in the following way,

The first school where I started my teaching career situated in the deep of hills. There was not a single Bangali there, all the students were indigenious. Experiences of my first posting were horrible. It is at Naniarchor, a 3-hours journey by water-vehicle from Rangamati sadar. I had to journey 3 hours more by boat from Naniarchor to reach the school. I worked there for 2.5 years and lived there in a rented room with a small girl. That time I was unmarried. I used to feel very lonely there. There was no television, electricity in that area. People go to bed so early. In that school, there were no water supply and toilet facilities.

The teacher also faces some challenges in arranging the sitting arrangement of the students. The school has inadequate classrooms and sitting arrangement. So, she faces some challenges to accommodate seats for all the students sometimes. She told,

Actually we face some problem with sitting arrangement, but what can we do! The number of students in pre-primary section is huge so the number of students in class 1 will be higher next year. I have a plan to shift class 1 to another classroom which is bigger than this one. I'll raise this issue in teachers' meeting. I add two additional benches in front of the class when all students are present.

The teacher likes to teach in a single shift school. According to her, contact hour (teacher-students in the class) of a single shift school is higher than that of a double shift school. All the classes start in same time. In this type of school, scope for drawing or recitation is higher than double shift schools. Another advantage of a single shift school is, all the students come to school together at 9:30 am, the school looks good, teachers pass busy time and the assembly with all the students of the school looks better. In a double shift school, the assembly held at afternoon in the sun. However, because of shortage of classrooms in the study school, the teachers are unable to start single shifting in the school.

The school has no play ground. As the other double shift schools the school arranges assembly at afternoon in between time of shift 1 and shift 2. In the assembly time, students and teachers stand in front of the classrooms but the space is not enough for all the students. For this reason, students of shift 2 attend the assembly where the students of shift 1 leave the school without attending assembly though participating in assembly is necessary for all the students.

Teachers' incentives and motivations have also received attention from policymakers and reformers. In particular, the relatively low pay and status afforded teachers have prompted reforms such as merit pay or career ladders to induce better performance from teachers and to bolster their commitment to teaching (Bacharach, Bauer, & Shedd, 1986). Better pay or reward for top performance, these strategies assume, will stimulate teachers to work harder and more effectively. The total budget for education in Bangladesh is only two percent of the GDP. This is lower than any other country in South Asia (Chowdhury, 2002, p. 57). The teacher gets very poor remuneration from the school. All the government primary school teachers work under same salary scale which is equivalent to the 4th class job salary scale. Most of the teachers of the school have very low educational qualification of secondary school certificate. As the other teachers, the teacher remunerated similarly though she has the highest academic degree of Master of Arts. Therefore, it is very difficult to her sustaining energy and enthusiasm for the work as she need to maintain her personal commitment to the job (Day, 2000).

The school where the teacher works is a government school. There is no fund in school from government except the salary of the teachers. Therefore, there is no fund for any other staff. As a result, teachers of the school have to do some extra academic, administrative and managerial works besides teaching. The teachers were observed ringing the school bell. Teaching is complex and demanding work and there is a daily need for teachers to fully engage in that work with not only their heads, but also their hearts (Day, 2004; Elliott & Crosswell, 2001; Fried, 1995; Nias, 1996). The teacher could spend more time thinking how to teach better if she would not have these sorts of responsibilities.

In terms of cultural background, the teacher could be described as being from mainstream and the

student population of her school is largely multicultural. There is a combination of Bangali students with different types of tribal students like Chakma, Marma, Tanchongya, Khisha, etc. in the school. They are also from different religious backgrounds. Teachers of the school are also heterogeneous in nature. It is not so easy teaching in such environment where the colleagues and students are from very different cultural backgrounds. Most of the tribal students struggle understanding Bangla language as they have different mother tongues. The teacher was telling about their language skill in the following way,

They (students from different tribal communities) do not understand Bangla so good. They understand English lesser than Bangla. Therefore, their participation in the classroom activities is lesser than the Bangali students. I used to work hard to let them understand.

Therefore, the teacher has to allocate some extra time for the tribal students. She has to keep it in her mind when she plans for a lesson.

3.2.6 Aspirations of the Teacher

Social reality and supports, organizational environment, economical status and many more other factors shape teachers' professional life, also their hopes and aspirations (Lave & Wenger, 1991; OECD, 2009). In case of this teacher, there is a high impact of her mother on her hopes and aspirations. Her mother is a schoolteacher and from her childhood, she observed her mother to teach small children.

In Bangladesh, teachers do not get the recognition they deserve. Teaching does not attract qualified and ambitious people because it is poorly remunerated. Father of the teacher wanted to see her as a government service holder. However, the teacher does not like that type of job. She loves teaching where she can work with lots of children and not have to deal with the outsiders. She is passionate about teaching. She wants to serve the nation by educating the small children who will lead the nation in future. Therefore, she has taken the greatest profession from her own interest.

The teacher wants to be a good teacher. She is confident enough and wants to develop herself as a good teacher. She welcomes the new methods and techniques of teaching-learning intervened by EIA. She wants more these types of training to be a good teacher. The researcher believes that she will be able to develop herself as a perfect teacher in course of time where students will be benefited maximum.

In over 9 years of teaching career, the teacher teaching her students Social Science, Mathematics and Religion. After joining EIA she got some intensive training on English language teaching. EIA also provided some printed and electronic materials to facilitate English language classroom. For last one and half years the teacher is teaching English. Now she is very interested teaching English where she could apply her knowledge and training on English language teaching-learning. She believes that, in this way her students will be more benefited. She wants to develop herself as a good English language teacher. For that reason, she wants more training like the training EIA provides. As she mentioned,

After getting training I've realized that the techniques what I learned should be applied in the classroom. Therefore, I told the head teacher to give me a chance teaching English where I can apply my training.

The teacher is not worried about the designation. She does not want to be a head teacher. If she becomes a head teacher then she will have to leave sadar Upazila and shift to another school. In this case, she could not live with her family. But she does not want to leave her family as she has two small babies. So, she is happy as an assistant teacher because she is now with her family. She said,

I am not expecting any position. I do not want to be a head teacher. If I promoted as head teacher then I have to be transferred to a rural area. At present, there is no vacant post of head teacher at Sadar Upazila. My children have career and I want them stay here to get better education. Therefore, I am not fascinated with my position. I want to stay with my family and teach my children better. I am willingly doing this. In this case, I will not have any frustration. I am much interested to improve my quality as a teacher. I never bother whether a position of head teacher is vacant or not. I would not take the offer if I even get the opportunity. In this position, scope of teaching is less. I am happy with my present position.

People's individual career decisions and aspirations are influenced by many factors. These factors include work motivation, values, and career and life planning. Each of these three factors is influenced by personal and organizational factors (Lacey, 2003). In the case of the teacher, her personal interest and life planning influenced her aspiration most. The teacher is much interested to develop herself as a teacher. According to her, head teacher is a position with less scope of teaching. If she becomes a head teacher she would be busy with lots of administrative works, rather teaching. However, she has taken the profession in spite of low salary as she loves to teach. She wants to be such a teacher that she could teach her students in the proper way. She wants more training to develop herself as a good teacher.

The teacher tries to teach with prior plan. According to her, she can teach more successfully when she make lesson plan before teaching. However, she does not get enough time in her home to make lesson plan as she has a little baby in home who does not let her do this. She is very hopeful to make the entire lesson plans when her baby will get some ages. She expects more training through which she will be able to build up her capacity to teach her students more scientifically.

4. Discussion

No education reform is possible without ownership and active participation of teachers. A good teacher is able to understand diversity in learning styles and in the physical and intellectual development of his/her students, and to create stimulating, participatory learning environments (Perry, 2017). In doing so, teachers should be respected and adequately remunerated. To ensure good teachers be put into place, they should have access to continuous professional development through training, including open and distance learning. This is also found that issues including low remuneration for teachers, lack of resources, double-shifts and overcrowded classrooms seriously limit the ability of qualified teachers to implement their learnings and deliver quality education (Perry, 2017). Thus, policymakers need to rethink on these issues for further improvement of the primary education system. In addition, active participation of teachers need to be ensured in the local and national level decisions that will affect their

professional lives and teaching environments.

Teacher's commitment has been identified as one of the most critical factors for the future success of education and schools (Huberman, 1993). Teacher's commitment is closely connected to teachers' work performance and their ability to innovate and to integrate new ideas into their own practice, absenteeism, staff turnover, as well as having an important influence on students' achievement in, and attitudes toward school (Firestone, 1996; Graham, 1996; Louis, 1998; Nias, 1981; Tsui & Cheng, 1999). The teacher is very much committed to teaching. If she keeps her commitment on teaching, she would be an ideal teacher in future and that is her aspiration. Thus, local education authority can arrange regular sessions with the teachers to keep them motivated with their profession and reward for their committed efforts.

This article is an attempt made to understand the professional life as well as the personal life of a Bangladeshi primary school teacher. Strong influence of the personal life of the teacher on her professional life and vice versa have been revealed by this study. The general findings evident that teacher has a huge workload, that includes many professional works beside teaching-learning in classroom and those activities influences the teacher's classroom practice. In spite of facing many challenges, the teacher is supported by her colleagues as well as by her family members and trying to provide her best for betterment of her students. She has the confidence and aspiration to develop herself to be a better teacher in future.

Acknowledgements

The researcher is thankful to the EIA-DU-OU (UK) Research Collaboration Programme for financing to collect the research data. He is highly grateful to the teacher for her contributions by directly taking part in the study process and expressing her views and opinions through the study methods applied. The researcher is also gratified to the head teacher for allowing him to conduct this research in her school and admitting head teacher, assistant teachers and the students' support in collection of in-depth data and insights for this study.

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Note

Note 1. School takes special care of the students who supposed to get scholarship (prediction made based on their academic performance). For this reason, two special batches have been created with some students of class 4 and 5. Students of those special batches come to the school at 9:30 am and stay till 4:15 pm, where they attend special lessons during shift-1 time period.